

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1143

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION OECD PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COPENHAGEN 1922

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, PFOR, EEC, DA

SUBJECT: DENMARK AND EUROPEAN UNION

REF: EC BRUSSELS 5854

1. SUMMARY: IN A WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION OF DENMARK'S
VIEWS ON THE COMMUNITY, FONOFF UNDER SECRETARY CHRISTENSEN
REITERATED DENMARK'S STRONG OBJECTIONS TO VISIONARY
CONCEPTS OF EUROPEAN UNION WHICH HAVE NO PRESENT CHANCE
OF ACCEPTANCE BY THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENTS,
PARTICULARLY DENMARK'S. CHRISTENSEN FELT THAT TALK
OF CREATING NEW INSTITUTIONS DISTRACTS FROM THE
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DIFFICULT AND COMPLEX PRACTICAL ISSUES WHICH CUR-

RENTLY REQUIRE ATTENTIONS. HE BELIEVES THAT A
STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH, WHILE LESS DRAMATIC, WOULD
BETTER ASSURE PROGRESS IN EUROPEAN COOPERATION. END
SUMMARY

2. REFERRING TO DANISH EC COMMISSIONER FINN GUNDELACH'S
RECENT PUBLIC DISAVOWAL OF THE COMMISSION'S REPORT
ON EUROPEAN UNION, DCM AND ECON COUNSELOR (BOTH
MAKING FAREWELL CALLS) ASKED FONOFF UNDER SECRETARY
JENS CHRISTENSEN WHETHER GUNDELACH WAS REPRESENTING
DANISH GOVERNMENT VIEWS AS WELL. CHRISTENSEN SAID
THAT, WHILE GUNDELACH OF COURSE REACHES INDEPENDENT
JUDGEMENTS AS A MEMBER OF THE EC COMMISSION, HIS
VIEWS ARE VERY CLOSE TO THOSE OF PRINCIPAL DANISH
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. (NOTE: GUNDELACH CLAIMED HE
WAS THE ONLY COMMISSIONER TO "VOTE" AGAINST THE
REPORT.)

3. CHRISTENSEN AGREED WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITH GUNDELACH'S
VIEW THAT NO USEFUL PURPOSE IS SERVED BY TALKING ABOUT
A EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT OR JOINT DEFESNE WHEN IT IS
CLEAR THAT MEMBER STATES WILL NOT ACCEPT THESE
CONCEPTS IN FACT. HE ALSO AGREED WITH GUNDELACH'S
DEFINITION OF PRIORITIES WHICH ARE "TO TEAM UP TO
SOLVE THE GRAVE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ALL MEMBER NATIONS
FACE. ONCE WE HAVE DRAFTED A CONCRETE WORKING
PROGRAM, THEN WE CAN SIT DOWN TO DISCUSS WHAT
INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES MIGHT FOLLOW."

4. THE COMMUNITY, IN CHRISTENSEN'S VIEW, SHOULD NOT
PERMIT ITSELF THE LUXURY OF IDEALISTIC DREAMS OF
FUTURE UNION; THESE PROVIDE AN ALMOST IRRESISTIBLE
TEMPTATION TO MINISTERS, AT EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETINGS
AND ELSEWHERE, TO FANTASIZE ABOUT THE DISTANT FUTURE
WHILE LEAVING DIFFICULT AND COMPLICATED CURRENT
ISSUES UNRESOLVED.

5. AN ADDITIONAL DANGER IN TOO SPECIFIC TALK OF
EUROPEAN UNION, CHRISTENSEN FELT, WAS THAT
THE PUBLIC IN MEMBER STATES -- CERTAINLY IN DENMARK --
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SIMPLY WILL NOT BUY UNREALISTIC VISIONS OF FUTURE
EUROPEAN UNION AND WILL LOSE CONFIDENCE IN LEADERS
WHO TALK OF THEM AS IF THEY ARE IN FACT REALIZABLE.
DREAMS OF THE FUTURE CANNOT DIVERT THE PUBLIC'S
ATTENTION FROM THE IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS
REQUIRING RESOLUTION NOR FROM THE KNOWLEDGE THAT
MEMBER STATES ARE STILL NOT INCLINED TO GIVE UP
ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE TO "THE GREATER GOOD."

6. NEW EC INSTITUTIONS ARE NOT CHRISTENSEN'S ANSWER TO CURRENT COMMUNITY PROBLEMS. HE FELT THAT THE EXISTING ONES MUST FIRST BE MADE TO WORK BETTER. IN HIS VIEW, THIS CAN ONLY BE DONE BY BUILDING EUROPE'S HOUSE BRICK BY BRICK. WHILE PLEASED THAT THE BRITISH REFERENDUM NOW REMOVES ONE OBSTACLE TO FORWARD PROGRESS, HE BELIEVES THAT THE CURRENT DIFFICULT ECONOMIC SITUATION AND THE RESULTING GREATER ECONOMIC DISPARITIES AMONG MEMBER STATES WILL CONTINUE TO DAMPEN PROGRESS. AT BEST, HE THOUGHT, THE COMMUNITY WILL DO WELL IN THIS PERIOD SIMPLY TO AVOID FURTHER DISINTEGRATION WHILE TRYING CAUTIOUSLY TO MOVE AHEAD -- SOMETIMES MERELY TO RECAPTURE LOST GROUND -- IN LIMITED AREAS. HE SAW SOME POSSIBILITIES IN IMPROVING MONETARY COOPERATION. THE FRENCH ARE REJOINING THE SNAKE, THE ITALIANS ARE MAKING SOME NOISES THAT THEY MAY BE ABLE TO DO THE SAME BEFORE TOO LONG, BUT THE BRITISH REMAIN A REAL PROBLEM. HE SAW VERY LITTLE POSSIBLE ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION EXCEPT FOR GENERAL COORDINATION OF POLICIES. THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON INDUSTRIAL STANDARDS AND OTHER STEPS TOWARD GREATER UNIFORMITY OF PRACTICES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY WOULD ALSO HELP IN SHOWING SOME PRACTICAL ACTIONS REMAIN POSSIBLE. WHILE NONE OF THESE ARE AS DRAMATIC PROPOSALS AS A DIRECTLY ELECTED EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, CHRISTENSEN FELT THEY REPRESENT REAL PROGRESS WHILE THE LATTER REMAIN DISTRACTING ILLUSIONS.

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7. AS A FINAL QUESTION, WE ASKED CHRISTENSEN WHETHER, GIVEN HIS SKEPTICISM OVER POSSIBILITIES OF EUROPEAN UNION IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE AND HIS DISILLUSIONMENT OVER THE PRESENT OPERATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY, DENMARK MAY NOT HAVE MADE A MISTAKE IN JOINING. CHRISTENSEN SAID THAT, WITHOUT DOUBT, DENMARK MADE THE ONLY SENSIBLE CHOICE IN 1972. THE ALTERNATIVE OF REMAINING OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY WOULD HAVE BEEN SO DAMAGING TO DENMARK'S INTERESTS THAT IT WAS LITERALLY UNTHINKABLE. HE SAW DENMARK'S PRINCIPAL BENEFITS AS BEING:

(A) AGRICULTURE PARTICIPATION IN THE CAP
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HAS PROVIDED REAL AND SIGNIFICANT MONETARY BENEFITS TO DANISH FARMERS AND ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES. DANISH AGRICULTURE WOULD HAVE DECLINED SHARPLY OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY.

(B) MONETARY BY PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMON EUROPEAN FLOAT (SNAKE) AND OTHER INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, THE DANISH KRONER HAS BEEN ABLE WEATHER SEVERAL SERIOUS STORMS WITHOUT ANY REAL JEOPARDY OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.

(C) A ROLE IN EUROPEAN DECISION MAKING COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP HAS GIVEN DENMARK A GREATER VOICE IN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ISSUES THAN IT OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE HAD. WITHOUT EC MEMBERSHIP, DENMARK WOULD HAVE REMAINED A SMALL, UNHEARD VOICE ON THE NORTHERN EDGE OF EUROPE.

8. LASTLY, CHRISTENSEN COMMENTED THAT HE REALLY WAS

NOT PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION; HE WAS MERELY PRAGMATIC. PROGRESS CANNOT BE MADE BY CREATING INSTITUTIONS WHICH HAVE NO CHANCE OF ACCEPTANCE BY THE PUBLIC AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS. WHILE SEEING ONLY SMALL FORWARD VISIBLE STEPS POSSIBLE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, HE FELT THAT THERE WAS ALSO AN AREA LESS VISIBLE WHERE REAL PROGRESS IN COOPERATION MAY PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT LONG RANGE BENEFITS. THIS IS IN THE GROWTH OF A COMMITTED BODY OF CIVIL SERVANTS, PARLIAMENTARIANS AND OTHERS AT BRUSSELS AND IN MEMBER STATES WHO ARE CONVINCED THAT MUTUAL COOPERATION REMAINS NOT ONLY AN IDEALISTIC GOAL BUT IS A PRACTICAL, DAY-TO-DAY NECESSITY FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL.

9. EMBASSY COMMENT: CHRISTEN IS PROBABLY DENMARK'S SINGLE MOST INFLUENTIAL CIVIL SERVANT ON COMMUNITY POLICY. HIS COMMENTS EXPRESS NOT ONLY HIS OWN PERSONAL VIEWS BUT HIS APPRECIATION OF THAT WHICH IS POSSIBLE IN DANISH POLITICS. WHILE NOT DENYING THAT EUROPEAN UNION IS A WORTHWHILE GOAL, HE FULLY RECOGNIZES THAT NEITHER THE DANISH PUBLIC NOR ITS

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PARLIAMENT WILL ACCEPT, AT PRESENT, EUROPEAN GOALS GOING BEYOND PRACTICAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION, THE RESULTS OF WHICH ARE VISIBLY BENEFICIAL TO DENMARK. IN DENMARK, FEAR OF GERMAN DOMINANCE, SUSPICION OF DIFFERING CULTURES (I.E., THE LATINS), AND THE CONVICTION THAT "THE DANISH WAY" IS BEST AND MUST BE PRESERVED LIE JUST BELOW THE SURFACE OF WHAT HAS NOW BECOME -- AFTER THE BRITISH REFERENDUM -- A RENEWED ACCEPTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION. TO DISRUPT THIS STILL FRAGILE ACCEPTANCE OF THE COMMUNITY WITH WIDER VISIONS OF EUROPEAN UNITY TENDS TO RENEW FEARS THAT DENMARK WOULD BE ENGULFED POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND CULTURALLY BY EUROPE'S LARGER POWERS. THEREFORE, DANISH OFFICIALS WILL DOWNPLAY ANY REFERENCES TO UNION. THEY ARE PLEASED TO HAVE THE BRITISH IN CAMP WITH THEM.

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